



Kyiv-Mohyla School of Journalism

Course “The Basics of Hermeneutics” Syllabus: 2019-2020

Prof. Serhiy Kvit
Office: 409, Building 4
Office Hours: by appointment

E-mail: smkvit@gmail.com

Cycle or graduate: Master
Field of studies: Journalism and Information 0303
Narrow field of studies: 8.03030101 - Journalism
Status of the course: elective

Number of hours

Total: 90
Lectures: 26
Independent work: 62
Final Control: exam

Course Description

The course “The Basics of Hermeneutics” is a necessary part of learning interpretation and mass communications theories. It provides an opportunity to gain the theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed for master’s level research. The course is designed for 6th year students of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Social Technologies, specializing in social communication.

“The Basics of Hermeneutics” is important for theoretical training in media studies, development of research skills, studying the hermeneutic phenomenon, exploration of the major intellectual discussions in European history in the philosophical, public and mass communications contexts. Students will have the opportunity to acquire a wide reader's experience, also the ability to use philosophical concepts for reaching an understanding and forming their own point of view on different hermeneutical topics.

Course Goal

As a result of studying the course you should know: (1) the foundations of the interpretation theory in its historical development; (2) the practical possibilities of philosophical hermeneutics; (3) the fundamentals of communicative philosophy. Therefore, by the end of the course you should be able to do the following:

- use philosophical concepts in a polemical context;
- build and defend your own point of view;
- think critically by evaluating any sources and messages;
- find understanding, self-understanding, and mutual understanding.

It also will help you to write well-constructed and appropriately formatted graduate-level papers.



Course Texts

Readings will be available in digital files and on-line:

1. Serhiy Kvit's blog: <http://kvit.ukma.edu.ua/category/hermeneutics/>
2. The Hermeneutics of Syle (2011):
<http://kvit.ukma.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/33-100-2-PB.pdf>
3. Герменевтика стилю (2011):
http://ekmair.ukma.edu.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/1086/Kvit_Hermeneutics%20of%20Style.pdf?sequence=1
4. Saint Augustine's Hermeneutical Universalism (2010):
http://kvit.ukma.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Saint-Augustines-Hermeneutical-Universalism_2010.pdf
5. Truth: Philosophy in Transit (2013):
<http://kvit.ukma.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Truth-Philosophy-in-Transit.pdf>
6. Філософська герменевтика і соціальні науки з погляду однієї дискусії (2007):
<https://goo.gl/wzUvVk>
7. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://plato.stanford.edu/>
8. Videos about Hermeneutics: <http://kvit.ukma.edu.ua/2018/08/video-about-hermeneutics/>

Main Topics

1. What is hermeneutics and the hermeneutical phenomenon?
2. The consistencies of aesthetic fashions changes.
3. The first systems of interpretation.
4. Greek heritage.
5. The inner word: St. Augustine.
6. The power of imagination: Ignatius Loyola.
7. Essayistic breakthrough: Montaigne and Pascal.
8. Hermeneutical strategies in the Ukrainian context: Skovoroda and Chyzhevskiyi
9. Romantic hermeneutics: Schleiermacher and Dilthey.
10. Husserl's Phenomenology.
11. Philosophical hermeneutics: Heidegger and Gadamer.
12. Postmodernism: Foucault and Derrida.
13. Philosophical hermeneutics and critical theory.
14. Hermeneutic practice.

Evaluation

Quality control during the trimester is in the forms of oral and written interrogations, collective discussions and individual presentations.

All writings must be performed on your own. Works that are similar to each other will be rejected.

Final control is carried out by the end of trimester in the form of a written exam or paper.



Conditions for the determination of student academic rankings (the second approach is exceptional):

Trimester work (participation in lectures and seminars) - 40 points;

Presentation within the course - 20 points;

Exam: 40 points;

Total: 100

Trimester work (distantly, for special situations) - 40 points;

Paper: 60 points;

Total: 100

Assignments

Topics for Presentations:

1. St. Augustine
2. Montaigne
3. Pascal
4. Kierkegaard
5. Dontsov
6. Malaniuk
7. Marseille
8. Bachelard
9. Frankl
10. Heidegger
11. Gadamer
12. Ricoeur
13. Borges
14. Derrida
15. Foucault
16. The Phenomenon of Europe
17. Psychoanalysis
18. Feminism
19. Existentialism
20. Structuralism
21. Postmodernism
22. Phenomenology
23. Muslim intellectualism
24. Literature as hermeneutics
25. Contemporary Ukrainian intellectualism: aesthetic and Mass communications aspects

There are three writing genres for homework: paper, review, and synopsis:

1. Paper is the biggest (up to 12 pages) and the most creative task. The topic for such writing is wide. You have to show not only how you are aware of the learned material, but express your own point of view, find the argumentation, using the gained knowledge to prove it. Keep in mind; I will not evaluate just the correct or incorrect answers. Your judgments could be absolutely non-standard or subjective in some points but they belong to you. The most important is your ability to exhaustively and convincingly explain the chosen position or to describe a phenomenon with the



help of a particular theory / theories. It is also important for the paper genre your ability to focus on a given topic and show deep understanding of the area. Particular attention will be paid to the competent and structured performance. That means not only the essence but also the form is important, because it shows the culture of your thinking. It should become really the beginning of your research work. One paper has to be prepared for the whole course. In fact, it will be the final work (final exam) at the end of the course.

2. Book (article, video) review: 3 pages. All requirements are similar like for a standard review. It is necessary to deeply consider the contents of the book, the intellectual context, the person of the author, the mentioned or applied theories, etc. - all that can be used for an interesting explanation of exactly why the book is important.

3. Synopsis: 1 page. The purpose of this genre is to describe what you know about certain definitions, notions or concepts. You have to be able to represent the topic briefly and meaningfully.

Topics for Papers:

1. Style is important.
2. I am within my time.
3. I am and myself.
4. Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in building the ability to mutual understanding.
5. Awareness of the essence of things gives a hope.
6. Political and philosophical emotions of the twentieth century.
7. New Ukrainian revolutions: the time to destroy and the time to build.
8. To be alone with my favorite piece of art.
9. Great philosophers between faith, understanding and calculation.
10. Why am I different?

Final Exam: The final exam will be a cumulative essay or paper of the material covered during the course.

Class Policy

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to be prepared and participate in every class. Absences can negate the cumulative structure of the course even if individual students have missed relatively few classes.

Academic Conduct: In accordance with Kyiv-Mohyla academy policy and recognized standards of conduct, any form of dishonesty is unacceptable. This includes plagiarism, cheating and the falsification of data. Plagiarism is the use of others' material, knowingly or unknowingly, that leave the perception it is the author's own.

Classroom Privacy: Recording classroom activities by any electronic means by students, other faculty, university administrators, or other observers / participants requires the permission of the instructor. All students in a class must be informed if permission has been giving for a class to be recorded.